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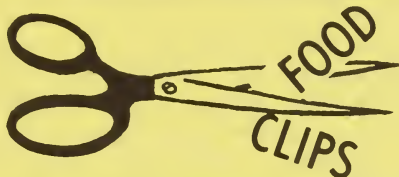
Food and Home Notes

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Lamb may be marinated in a seasoned mixture of half oil and half vinegar or other acid ingredient for several hours in the refrigerator before broiling, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture home economists.

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Many cuts of lamb can be braised without added liquid, because their own juices provide enough moisture. If you do add water or tomato juice, use just enough to keep meat from scorching.

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For a "frenched" leg of lamb -- just ask your butcher to remove enough meat from the shank end of a leg roast to expose an inch or more of bone.

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Canned fruit servings -- you'll find that a 29 ounce can yields about seven servings if liquid is served with the fruit; four or five servings if the fruit is drained, according to USDA home economists.

HERE COME THE ANTS!

It's the time of year. It's the season--and it's warm. But, if ants invade your home, remember, there are ways to control them. First find the ants' nests, if possible. Chlordane is an effective insecticide to use against ants. An application will quickly kill ants in the current infestation and will prevent reinfestation for weeks or months according to Agricultural Research scientists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

To prevent ants from entering the house it is best to apply the insecticide around the foundation of the house. Inside the house you need to check and treat such places as cracks along shoe moldings, baseboards, window frames and door frames. Cracks in floors or walls, electrical outlets and plumbing and heating pipelines are also favorite spots for ants.

Once every two or three months should be sufficient for treatment. Be very cautious about using the insecticide, however; there should be no drifting spray mist.

FOOD PRESERVATION SERIES ****

Drying is the process of removing moisture from a food to a point at which microorganisms are inhibited from growing. In developing countries and in some of our states, foods may be successfully dried by the sun -- but other ways may be more practical. Food preservation -- by drying -- requires little equipment. However, this method may not be practical, in some localities, for large quantities of food due to fuel costs.

A wide variety of fruits and vegetables may be preserved by drying -- artichoke, asparagus, green beans, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, corn, celery, eggplant, horseradish, okra, onions, parsley, peas, peppers, potatoes, squash, spinach, peaches, pears, grapes, apples, apricots, figs, prunes, and coconut. However -- some dry better than others. Local information should be checked with your State or County Extension Office.

The steps commonly followed are: Preparation of the food, blanching, drying, packaging, and storage. Some foods (peppers and pimentos) may be dried without blanching.

Preparation of food to be dried: Select fresh, good quality fruits and vegetables. Trim away inedible and damaged portions. Cut into halves, strips, or slices that dry readily. A general guide is that strips should be 1/8th to 1/4th inch thick.

Blanching: Blanching is the process of heating food sufficiently to inactivate the natural enzymes in the food. If the blanching step is omitted or inadequate, the food will have poorer flavor and color. Blanching may be done in steam or in hot water. Water blanching is quicker but may leach out some color and minute amounts of nutrients.

Drying Methods: Extension Service recommended drying methods include kitchen oven drying, a specially constructed dehydrator, or in the sun. (Agricultural Research Service of USDA has not done research on drying of foods.)

- (1) Kitchen oven: You will need wooden trays, an appropriate thermometer, and a small fan. The prepared food is placed in thin layers not over 1/8th of an inch thick in a preheated oven to 160 degrees F. Hot circulating air maintained at about 140 degrees F. by means of propping the oven door open about 4 inches and placing a fan outside the oven. Temperature may be lowered near the end of the drying period. Drying time varies from 6 to 16 hours, depending on type of food, size, and tray load.

DRYING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES IN THE HOME

- (2) Home dehydrator: May be constructed from wood such as plywood or other types of wallboard. The source of heat may be a flame, or an electric coil. Directions for construction and use may be obtained by writing to Evelyn H. Johnson, Extension Service, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. This method permits drying in quantity 9 to 14 pounds per batch in 6 to 16 hours.



- (3) Sun drying: Is unpredictable unless temperatures are over 100 degrees F. and relative humidity is low. Unfavorable conditions lead to souring and molding.

Then: Put prepared food on drying trays; cover with cheese cloth or other thin cloth to protect against insects. Turn food pieces over once each day. If nighttime temperature is more than 20 degrees lower than daytime temperature, place trays under cover as in a house or garage. Drying time will probably be 3-4 days depending on piece size.

Lean meat is sometimes dried in the sun with moderate success only in extremely dry sections of North America. The usual treatment is to salt the meat before drying it in the sun, or in shade with slow fire to aid the process. However, the classic jerky is never salted.

Test for sufficiently dry. Cool the test piece before testing for dryness. Most vegetables should be dried to the "brittle" stage; fruits are dry when no longer sticky. They will feel tough or leathery. People inexperienced in drying fruits tend to overdry them.

Packaging: Keep dried foods dry and protect them from insects. They should be packaged as soon as they are cool. Use dry, scalded, insect-proof containers. Suitable containers are glass jars or metal cans with well-fitting lids, moisture-proof heavy paper bags or cartons. Pack food tightly without crushing. Small containers are better than large ones as some moisture from the air will be absorbed each time the container is opened.

Storage: Store in a dry, cool, and dark place. If dark storage is not available, wrap glass or clear containers in paper or place in boxes. If weather is humid, check dried foods occasionally for safety. If moisture is found, reheat the food for 15 minutes, cool and reseal. ALL dried foods deteriorate to some extent during storage, losing vitamins, flavor, color, and aroma. As a general rule, plan to use dried foods within 6 to 8 months.

COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR A WEEK (April)

	<u>Low-Cost Plan</u>	<u>Moderate-Cost Plan</u>	<u>Liberal Plan</u>
Families			
Young couple.....	\$25.70	\$32.20	\$39.00
Elderly couple.....	20.90	26.60	31.70
Family of 4 with preschool children.....	37.20	46.60	56.00
Family of 4 with elementary school children.....	43.40	54.50	66.10
Individuals*			
Women			
20-34 years.....	10.80	13.50	16.10
35-54 years.....	10.30	13.00	15.40
55 years and over.....	8.70	11.10	13.10
Men			
20-34 years.....	12.60	15.80	19.40
35-54 years.....	11.70	14.60	17.60
55 years and over.....	10.30	13.10	15.70
Children			
1-2 years.....	6.30	7.80	9.30
3-5 years.....	7.50	9.50	11.20
6-8 years.....	9.20	11.60	14.30
9-11 years.....	10.80	13.60	16.30
Girls 12-19 years.....	11.60	14.70	17.40
Boys 12-19 years.....	13.60	17.30	20.50

* Food cost for any family can be figured by totaling costs shown in table for individuals of sex and age of various members of the family as follows:

- o For those eating all meals at home (or carrying some meals from home), use amounts shown.
- o For those eating some meals out, deduct 5 percent from amount in table for each meal not eaten at home. Thus, for a person eating lunch out 5 days a week, subtract 25 percent or one-fourth the cost shown.
- o For guests, include for each meal eaten, 5 percent of amount shown in table for the proper age group.

Next, adjust the total figure if more or fewer than four people generally eat at the family table. Costs shown are for individuals in 4-person families. Adjustment is necessary because larger families tend to buy and use foods more economically than smaller ones. Thus, for a 1-person family, add 20 percent; 2 persons, add 10 percent; 3, add 5 percent; 4, use as is; 5, subtract 5 percent; 6 or more, subtract 10 percent.

NOTE: Additional information for the MEDIA and photographs (when applicable) may be obtained from: Shirley Wagener, Editor of Food and Home Notes, Room 535A, Office of Communication/Press Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Or telephone 202-447-5898.